1: Jpn J Cancer Res 1994 Oct;85(10):1045-9

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Association of vascular endothelial growth factor expression with tumor angiogenesis and with early relapse in primary breast cancer.

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Angiogenesis is an independent prognostic indicator in breast cancer. In this report, the relationship between expression of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF; a selective mitogen for endothelial cells) and the microvessel density was examined in 103 primary breast cancers. The expression of VEGF was evaluated by immunocytochemical staining using anti-VEGF antibody. The microvessel density, which was determined by immunostaining for factor VIII antigen, in VEGF-rich tumors was clearly higher than that in VEGF-poor tumors ($P < 0.01$). There was a good correlation between VEGF expression and the increment of microvessel density. Furthermore, postoperative survey demonstrated that the relapse-free survival rate of VEGF-rich tumors was significantly worse than that of VEGF-poor tumors. It was suggested that the expression of VEGF is closely associated with the promotion of angiogenesis and with early relapse in primary breast cancer.

PMID: 7525523 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

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